

UNCLASSIFIED 1/21/79

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ACTION SS-30

INFO OCT-01 ADS-00 SSO-00 /031 W

O R 212041Z NOV 79
FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5372
INFO AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
USMISSION GENEVA

-----106917 212119Z /75
ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS

Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

☒ Release ☐ Excise ☐ Deny

Exemption(s):

Declassify: ☐ In Part ☒ In Full

☐ Classify as ☐ Extend as ☐ Downgrade to

Date Declassify on Reason

[REDACTED] SANTIAGO 8010

DECAPTIONED

E. O. 12065: GDS 11-21-85 (GROVER, CHARLES W.) OR-M
TAGS: SHUM, CI, AR
SUBJECT: ALLEGED ARGENTINE CLANDESTINE PRISON

REF: SANTIAGO 6719

1. [REDACTED] ENTIRE TEXT.

2. SUMMARY: THE CHILEAN WHO ALLEGEDLY SAW EX-ARGENTINE AMBASSADOR HIDALGO IN AN ARGENTINE CONCENTRATION CAMP EARLY IN 1979 HAS MADE A SWORN DEPOSITION REGARDING HIS ALLEGED EXPERIENCES. KEY PARTS OF THE DEPOSITION DO NOT JIBE WITH INFORMATION OBTAINED FROM ICRC TO DATE. END SUMMARY.

3. THE EMBASSY HAS OBTAINED A COPY OF A SWORN DECLARATION PREPARED BY PEDRO REYES GONZALES ON OCTOBER 22, 1979. REYES' STATEMENT IS FILLED WITH DETAILS, SOME OF WHICH RAISES MORE QUESTIONS THAN IT ANSWERS ABOUT THE VERACITY OF HIS ACCOUNTS. REYES IS THE PRINCIPAL SOURCE OF REPORTS THAT EX-ARGENTINE AMBASSADOR TO VENEZUELA HECTOR HIDALGO SOLA WAS ALIVE AND IN ARGENTINE HANDS AS OF EARLY 1979.

4. FOLLOWING IS AN INFORMAL SUMMARY TRANSLATION OF REYES'

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STATEMENT. THE KEY INCONSISTENCY WITH OTHER REPORTS FROM GENEVA IS REYES' ASSERTION THAT ICRC EMPLOYEES ACTUALLY TOOK HIM FROM THE

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DETENTION CAMP TO BUENOS AIRES IN A SMALL PLANE AND ARRANGED HIS REPATRIATION BY TRAIN TO SALTA AND THENCE TO ANTOFAGASTA.

5. REYES SAYS THAT HE HAD LIVED IN ARGENTINA FROM OCTOBER 1958 AND WAS WORKING FOR YPF IN COMODORO RIVADAVIA WHEN DETAINED BY ARGENTINE GENARMERIA IN OCTOBER 1978. HE SAYS HE WAS TAKEN FIRST TO A DETENTION CAMP LOCATED THREE KILOMETERS FROM COMODORO RIVADAVIA AND FROM THERE TO THE CAMP IN RIO NEGRO LOCATED BETWEEN GENERAL ROCCA AND ALLIEN (SIC) WHICH ABUTTED ON HIGHWAY 22. THE CAMP WAS SURROUNDED BY A FIFTEEN-FOOT HIGH BARBED WIRE FENCE AND WAS 70 METERS BY 120 METERS IN DIMENSION. IT HAD NO STRUCTURES. DETAINEES SLEPT UNPROTECTED. FOOD WAS PROVIDED IRREGULARLY.

6. REYES SAYS HE WAS TORTURED AT THE CAMP TO EXTRACT AN ADMISSION THAT HE HAD PROVIDED PETROLEUM PRODUCTION FIGURES TO CHILE. HE APPARENTLY STILL SHOWS SIGNS OF THE BLOWS ADMINISTERED TO HIS FACE AND BURN MARKS HE ASSERTS WERE CAUSED BY PIECES OF RED-HOT METAL PRESSED INTO HIS SKIN. REYES SAID THAT THERE WERE SOME 400 PRISONERS IN THE COMPOUND, AMONG THEM WOMEN AND CHILDREN. HE SAYS HE MET HIDALGO, WHO TOLD REYES THAT HE HAD REQUESTED HIS GOVERNMENT'S PERMISSION TO RETURN TO BUENOS AIRES FOR THE WEDDING OF A DAUGHTER. HIDALGO SAID HE WAS DETAINED UPON ARRIVAL IN BUENOS AIRES AND TAKEN IMMEDIATELY TO VARIOUS DETENTION CENTERS, EVENTUALLY THE ONE AT RIO NEGRO. REYES SAYS THAT ESTRELLA IGLESIAS OF THE ARGENTINE WOMEN'S FEDERATION TOLD HIM SHE HAD BEEN PICKED UP ABOUT TWO YEARS BEFORE. HE ALSO ASSERTS HE MET BEATRIZ PERORIA, PRESIDENT OF THE ARGENTINE PSYCHOLOGISTS' ASSOCIATION. REYES THEN GIVES A LIST OF CHILEANS HE HAD KNOWN AT THE CAMP INCLUDING A MARIST BROTHER FROM TALCA MANED BERNAREO. HE ALSO SAID HE KNEW THREE FRENCH NUNS WHO DISAPPEARED IN BUENOS AIRES SIX MONTHS

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BEFORE BUT THAT HE DOES NOT RECALL THEIR NAMES.

7. REYES IDENTIFIES AS DETENTION CAMPS THE ONE AT COMODORO RIVADAVIA WHICH HELD 150 PEOPLE; ANOTHER CAMP LOCATED THREE KILOMETER WEST OF TRELEW WHICH HELD APPROXIMATELY 300 PRISONERS; AND A CAMP THREE MILES FROM THE COAL MINES AT RIO TURBIO WHERE APPROXIMATELY 150 PERSONS WERE HELD; AND A CAMP SIX KILOMETERS NORTH OF SALTA HOLDING 300 PRISONERS.

8. ACCORDING TO REYES, ON FEBRUARY 23, 1979, AT APPROXIMATELY 10 A.M. TWO TWIN-MOTOR CESSNA AIRCRAFT MARKED "C.R.I." BEGAN

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CIRCULING THE CAMP AND SUBSEQUENTLY LANDED NEARBY. REYES SAYS THAT AMBASSADOR HIDALGO WAS THE FIRST TO SUGGEST THE THE C.R.I. STOOD FOR CRUZ ROJA INTERNACIONAL. UPON LANDING THE PILOTS AND TWO REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ICRC AND A WOMAN FROM AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL -- WHO APPARENTLY WORKED FROM THE BRITISH EMBASSY IN BUENOS AIRES -- APPROACHED THE CAMP. REYES SAYS THAT BECAUSE OF HIS FACILITY WITH LANGUAGES, HE SERVED AS INTERPRETOR FOR THE GROUP. THE WOMAN FROM AMNESTY ALLEGEDLY TOLD HIM THAT SHE HAD TAKEN PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE CAMP AND HAD TAPED SOME CONVERSTATIONS WITH CAMP GUARDS. THE VISITORS DISTRIBUTED A LARGE QUANTITY OF FOOD AND CLOTHING AND DECIDED TO EVACUATE A FEW OF THE PRISONERS TO BUENTS AIRES AT ONCE. REYES, IN ILL HEALTH BECAUSE OF HIS BATTERED GENITALS, AND A PREGNANT CHILEAN WOMAN WITH HER THREE CHILDREN LANDED AT BUENOS AIRES IN AN AIRPORT WHOS NAME REYES DOES NOT REMEMBER. ARGENTINE OFFICIALS AT THE AIRPORT EXPRESSED DISMAY AT THE PRISONERS' CONDITION AND TURNED THEM OVER TO THE ARGENTINE ARMY WHICH FED THEM AND PROVIDED THEM WITH CLOTHES. EVENTUALLY THEY WERE EXPELLED WITH 26 OTHER CHILEANS BY TRAIN TO SALTA AND THEN TO ANTOFAGASTA.

COMMENT: THE FOREGOING DOCUMENT WAS PROVIDED BY THE VICARIATE OF SOLIDARITY. IN A COVERING NOTE A SENIOR VICARIATE OFFICIAL OBSERVED THAT THE VICARIATE COULD NOT VERIFY THE INFORHATION PROVIDED BY REYES. REYES' STORY, PARTICULARLY THE PART RELATING TO HIS [REDACTED]

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RELEASE FROM THE CAMP, IS EASILY VERIFIABLE THROUGH THE ICRC. IT DOES NOT SEEM TO SQUARE WITH THE INFORMATION RECEIVED FROM THAT SOURCE SO FAR, AN ANOMALY CASTING DOUBT OVER THE REST OF REYES' DEPOSITION.

THE DEPARTMENT MAY WISH TO INSTRUCT GENEVA TO CHECK REYES' STATEMENT WITH ICRC OFFICIALS.
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